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*Songs from Dreamland*

*May Kendall*

Practicing 40

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**SONGS FROM DREAMLAND**

**ABERDRENN UNIVERSITY PRESS.**

# SONGS FROM DREAMLAND

BY

MAY KENDALL

AUTHOR OF "FROM A GARRET," "DREAMS TO SELL,"  
"SUCH IS LIFE," ETC.

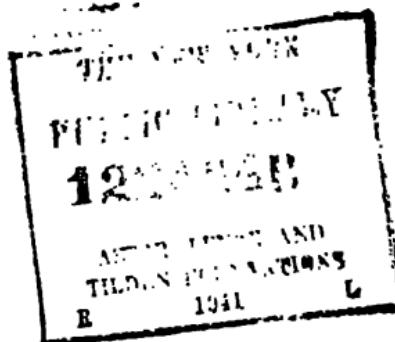
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MANY of these verses first appeared in *Longman's Magazine*.  
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## SONGS FROM DREAMLAND.

### A CASTLE IN THE AIR.

THE mansions *they* erected,  
Erected were of brick,  
And were by tiles protected:  
The air with dust was thick,  
As 'twould the builders smother—  
They built on unaware.  
*I* dreamed of something other,  
A castle in the air!

I said: "Your bricks and mortar  
Are hideous to view;  
I'll seek another quarter,  
That shall be free from *you*:  
A more imposing dwelling  
You shall see, if you care,  
A palace far excelling—  
A castle in the air".

I

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They guarded from disaster  
 Their roofs with wooden beams ;  
 They fixed their walls with plaster—  
 I fixed *my* walls with dreams.  
 A dome of high expansion,  
 Alight with jewels rare—  
*That* was a *real* mansion—  
 My castle in the air.

They never were contented,  
 They fought with spades and tools ;  
 They said I was demented,  
 I said that they were fools.  
 I built on in my manner,  
 They hardly turned to stare ;  
 I crowned with many a banner  
 My castle in the air.

When ended were their labours  
 They entered in to feast,  
 They called their friends and neighbours :  
 The wind blew from the east.  
 To them it did not matter,  
 The gale their walls would spare ;  
 It only chose to shatter  
 My castle in the air.



And now the shadows darken,  
The wind blows through the rain,  
Whereto the builders hearken,  
Who safe at home remain,  
In piles of brick undoubted ;  
Yet mine was far more fair,  
My palace that they scouted,  
My castle in the air !

## SONGS OF THE CITY.

### THE PHANTOM TRAIN.

THESE unbefriended city drudges,  
At last they break away;  
Not all the juries and the judges  
Could force their longer stay.  
There's not a Philistine who grudges  
The hard won holiday.

Fades all the city's hurly-burly,  
They choose their bournes at will,  
Yon grimy porter, rough and surly,  
Is bound for heath and hill.  
The shop girl toiling late and early  
Lights at a hamlet still.

The dry old scholar, grey with learning,  
Methought, no friends had he,  
And yet some kindly face discerning  
He surely seems to be!  
The wind to welcome his returning  
Is blowing from the sea.

The April sunshine has departed,  
The city's bleak and drear—  
Who gaily on your revel started,  
Alas, what do you here,  
You passengers so heavy-hearted  
That were so light of cheer ?

A dream before the ledger flitted,  
A dream before the brain ;  
Ah, yet the toil is unremitted,  
The journeying is vain !  
The train the city never quitted,  
'Twas but a phantom train !

## IN THE DRAWING-ROOM.

FURNITURE with the languid mien,  
On which life seems to pall—  
With your insipid grey and green  
And drab, your cheerless wall—  
To think that she has really been  
An hour among you all.

I wonder, since she went away,  
Has no one ever guessed  
Why constantly you look more grey,  
More green, and more depressed.  
I know—you know, you had your day,  
Now you need only rest.

Yon heavy, yellow easy-chair,  
Right opposite the door,  
Ah, how impassively you stare  
Across the dreary floor ;  
Yet even you would be aware  
If she should come once more.

I see the dingy curtains stir  
With a faint memory ;  
The grand piano dreams of her  
In a drowsy minor key.  
Rest tranquilly, old furniture,  
To-night it may not be !

## THE SANDBLAST GIRL AND THE ACID MAN

O F all the cities far and wide,  
The city that I most prefer,  
Though hardly through the fog descried,  
Is Muggy Manchester.  
Of all its buildings the most dear,  
I find a stained glass factory—  
Because the sandblast girl works here,  
In the same room with me !

It made a most terrific din,  
Of yore, that sandblasting machine,  
I cursed the room I laboured in,  
And all the dull routine,  
And the *old* sandblast girl, who broke,  
Of coloured glass, so many a sheet,  
In fruitless efforts to evoke  
Tracery clear and neat.

## THE SANDBLAST GIRL AND ACID MAN. 9

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That sandblast girl, at last she left—  
They couldn't let her blunders pass.  
But Maggie's hands are slim and deft,  
They never break the glass !  
From ruby, orange, or from blue,  
The letters stand out clear as pearl.  
The fellows say they never knew  
So smart a sandblast girl !

I raise my eyes : I see her stand,  
A sheet of glass her arms embrace ;  
Out spurts the narrow stream of sand  
On each uncovered space,  
Till perfectly the work is done,  
And clear again grows Maggie's brow—  
Till a fresh labour is begun,  
She's merely human, now !

And sometimes when her hands are free,  
While with my acid still I work,  
She'll give a hasty glance at me,  
Embossing like a Turk.  
Her pretty hair so soft and brown  
Is coiled about her shapely head,  
And I look up and she looks down,  
And both of us go red !

10 *THE SANDBLAST GIRL AND ACID MAN.*

---

She has a dress of navy blue,  
A turn-down collar, white and clean  
As though no smoke it travelled through,  
And smuts had never seen.  
I've noticed that white snowdrop bells  
Have a peculiar look of her !  
And nothing but her pallor tells  
Of Muggy Manchester.

Just twenty shillings every week !  
And always somebody distressed  
Wants helping ; and you feel a sneak  
If you don't do your best.  
Suppose that I began to hoard,  
And steeled my heart, my coffer hid,  
I wonder if I could afford  
To —— Would she, if I did ?

She has a mother to support,  
And I've a sister. Trade's not brisk,  
And for a working man, in short,  
Life is a fearful risk.  
*The Clarion* I sometimes read,  
I muse upon in winter nights,  
I wonder if they'll e'er succeed  
In putting things to rights !

**THE SANDBLAST GIRL AND ACID MAN. 11**

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I'm vastly better off than some !  
I think of how the many fare  
Who perish slowly, crushed and dumb,  
For leisure, food and air.  
'Tis hard, in Freedom's very van,  
To live and die a luckless churl.  
'Tis hard to be an acid man,  
*Without* a sandblast girl !

## IN THE GALLERY.

HERE are red stars all around it,  
On the works of other men ;  
But there isn't one has found it,  
Though 'tis only two pounds ten.  
Right and left they still go flying,  
Till I frequently remark :  
" It's as if they had been trying  
For my picture, in the dark".

Right and left the red stars cluster ;  
And a pleasant tale they tell,  
With their warm and cheery lustre,  
To the men whose pictures sell.  
And one's prospects might be clearer—  
But it always was the way—  
And I see the stars grow nearer,  
They will hit—some other day.

## IN THE MINSTER.

IN the choir the service is,  
In the choir the sermon's heard,  
In the choir you cannot miss—  
Save in sleep—the smallest word—  
Flowing, ebbing, strong and free,  
Through the nave the music flows,  
With unearthly melody  
Comforting the souls of those  
Of theology who tire,  
Who the sermon gladly waive—  
For the saints are in the choir,  
And the sinners in the nave.

On a day you may recall,  
Not the last, but near the last,  
With small heart for ritual,  
Down into the nave we passed ;  
For life's pulses beat so slow,  
And the whole world had gone wrong,—  
From the organ 'gan to flow  
Such a wondrous golden song,

---

Dreaming of a gladness higher,  
Deeper than our dreams could crave,  
There we stood, and blessed the choir  
For the music in the nave.

Softly forth again we trod,  
When the harmony was done,  
And the vergers, rod on rod,  
Eyed us coolly, one by one,  
Though the stoker, truth to say,  
Stoking at the farther end,  
When he saw us steal away  
Smiled upon us like a friend—  
Occupied with mundane fire,  
He forgets the precept grave,  
That the saints are in the choir,  
And the sinners in the nave.

Yet, a stronger link may be  
Than the barrier 'twixt the twain ;  
Since through all humanity  
Beats the common pulse of pain.  
Human souls cry out for aid,  
Bitter mysteries propound  
In the pulpit's very shade,  
Ay, within its hallowed bound !  
Hearts are filled with vain desire  
For the gifts life never gave,  
Though the saints are in the choir,  
And the sinners in the nave !

### A FOSSIL.

**H**E had his Thirty-nine Articles,  
And his Nicene Creed.  
And his Athanasian. Nothing else  
He appeared to need.  
He looked like a walking dogma, pent  
Neath a shovel brim ;  
If he never knew what the dogma meant,  
'Twas small blame to him.

He did not hazard a single guess,  
That might lead to twain,  
Whose answers never would coalesce  
In a peaceful brain !  
He seemed pure fossil : yet I protest  
That across the aisle  
I one day saw him of life possessed  
For a little while !



“ And streams in the desert,” sang the choir.  
What a strange surmise  
Just then awoke, like a smouldering fire,  
In his weary eyes !  
*That* never came from the Nicene Creed—  
‘Twas a dream, I know,  
Of some fair day when he lived indeed,  
In the long ago !

## A LEGEND.

**A** Y, an old story, yet it might  
Have truth in it—who knows?  
Of the heroine's breaking down one night  
Just ere the curtain rose.

And suddenly, when fear and doubt  
Had shaken every heart,  
There stepped an unknown actress out  
To take the heroine's part.

But oh the magic of her face,  
And oh the songs she sung,  
And oh the rapture in the place,  
And oh the flowers they flung !

But she never stooped : they lay all night  
As when she turned away  
And left them—and the saddest light  
Shone in her eyes of grey.

She gave a smile in glancing round,  
And sighed, one fancied, then—  
But never they knew where she was bound,  
Or saw her face again.

But the old prompter, grey and frail,  
They heard him murmur low :  
“ It could only be Meg Coverdale,  
Died thirty years ago,

“ In that old part who took the town ;  
And she was fair, as fair  
As when they shut the coffin down  
On the gleam of her golden hair ;

“ And it wasn’t hard to understand  
How a lass so fair as she  
Could never rest in the Promised Land  
Where none but angels be.”

## A FESTIVAL.

WE were parted--just by two,  
But it might have been a score,  
For the whole long banquet through  
I could see your face no more,  
Could not even hear your voice !  
You were whelmed and lost between  
Specimens extremely choice,  
Of a lawyer and a dean !

Sitting for two mortal hours,  
Hours the longest I had known,  
Scowling at the ferns and flowers,  
Striving still to catch your tone.  
On my right, a dame bereft  
Of her cook, deplored her plight,  
While a maiden on my left  
Prated of the Astral Light.

Purgatory seemed our doom !  
Now, we turn regretful eyes  
To that dreary dining-room,  
And it looks like Paradise !  
For we know, who see to-night  
Time and Fate step in between,  
Barriers how brief and slight  
Were a lawyer and a dean !

## ARTHUR STREET.

THE old, old way ! How oft for this  
A briefer path I'd spurn,  
And hurry like the wind, I wis,  
No earlier to return !

They chose me for my footsteps fleet,  
Nor dreamed that I should say :  
" My nearest way's by Arthur Street,  
I know the nearest way ! "

'Tis twenty years ago, and yet,  
For that old memory,  
The other roads I all forget,  
That had no goal for me.

Yet, when I reached it in those days,  
How timidly I went,  
With just a brief and furtive gaze  
At *one* grey tenement !

What now ? For I am old and worn,  
And every dweller's new—  
The street I passed by many a morn,  
To-day I may pass through.

## UNDERGROUND.

(The PORTER speaks.)

A quarter of an hour to wait,  
And quite sufficient too,  
Since your remarks on Bishopsgate  
Impress the mind as true,  
Unless you work here soon and late,  
Till 'tis like home to you.

You see, a chap stands what he must,  
He'll hang on anywhere ;  
He'll learn to live on smoke and dust,  
Though 'tisn't healthy fare.  
We're used to breathing grime in, just  
Like you to breathing air.

And yet 'tis odd to think these trains,  
In half an hour, maybe,  
Will be right out among green lanes,  
Where the air is pure and free.  
Well, sir, there's Bishopsgate remains  
For us, and here are we !

Your train. First class, sir. That's your style !  
In future, I'll be bound,  
You'll stick to hansoms, since you'd spile  
Here in the Underground.  
I've got to wait a little while  
Before *my* train comes round.

### AN OLD SINGER.

THE ghost of what she used to be,  
They say—and it is true,  
Yet half it seems to you and me  
The very voice we knew !

Remember how we heard her first—  
You, Winnie, Nell and I !  
You recollect the glorious burst  
Of pride and ecstasy ?

The hardly purchased flowers we took,  
And flung, and how they fell  
Close by her, and her kindly look  
At Winnie and at Nell !

Oh, we loved music ! Life was grand !  
How young we were, and gay !  
At times I cannot understand  
How such things pass away.

Yesterday of her vanished fire  
One spoke, her lost renown—  
I had a half insane desire  
To knock the fellow down.

We only heard—Heaven knows what strain—  
But in your heart and mine  
A chord long mute awoke in pain,  
Once thrilled in joy divine !

So dear the perished youth—so weak  
Our mortal memories—  
What wonder if our spirits seek  
No other Paradise ?

O God, give back the buried time !  
Give back the songs she sung !  
The singer always in her prime,  
We others always young !

## THE BALLAD OF THE FLAG PAINTER.

In a wideawake not worn for show  
He passes every day.

He's an artist, like myself, I know,  
But *he* is an R. A.

And a thousand pounds if *I* could make  
By painting some great lord,  
I think a better wideawake  
I'd manage to afford !

Small difference between our tiles !  
Only my coat's in rags,  
And it is canvas that *he* spiles,  
I merely spile the flags.

His reputation is immense—  
I never liked him less.  
He's often flung a few odd pence  
To a comrade in distress.

And however green his hat may look,  
Of tin he must be flush—  
They say he always has a duke  
Or duchess neath his brush !

His portraits in a gallery  
I've seen, but for my part,  
Though painted very skilfully,  
I didn't call it *art*!

Devoid of beauty or of mirth,  
They only seemed to stare  
As if they wondered who on earth  
The *other* portraits were.

No need of galleries for me,  
My works of art to hold!  
Because the new ones, don't you see,  
I paint upon the old.

See how the silvery moonbeams fall  
On this forsaken pile  
And ruined bridge—that's what I call  
The true poetic style!

Only—a shower will come some day,  
And spoil my pictures, when  
I cannot see them washed away,  
Or paint them in again.

They'll run together, blue and pink,  
And sea and shore and sky,  
There'll never be a soul to think  
Of keeping the things dry.

28 *THE BALLAD OF THE FLAG PAINTER.*

---

The flags, for me, will stay quite clean.  
But when I'm dead and gone,  
*His* duchesses will smile serene  
Posterity upon.

And so he'll win—but I confess,  
I've very little doubt,  
Some of his dukes and duchesses  
Had better be washed out !

### PHIL'S RACE.

YES, his memory is fading,  
Other runners take his place ;  
But a few of us remember  
Phil the athlete's crowning race.

For Lord Trevor had a fortune  
Staked upon him, and he knew,  
If he lost the race, 'twould ruin  
Trevor—ay, and others, too.

Therefore, when the surgeon told him  
Death raced with him, breath for breath ;  
Phil replied, he'd pledged his honour  
To beat Murray—likewise Death !

So they set out, Phil and Murray ;  
It was grand to see Phil start,  
In his fine old tranquil fashion,  
The death warrant at his heart.

Had a rumour reached Lord Trevor ?  
He showed nothing, as he stood,  
With the hand that held the eyeglass  
Steady as if carved in wood.

And his countenance impassive ;  
Did he murmur inwardly,  
That it would be deuced awkward,  
If the man he backed should die ?

Oh, but we who knew the secret,  
Not a pulse beat, not a breath,  
Seemed to stir the air about us,  
As Phil ran his race with Death

All had stakes down on the issue ;  
Ah, but some with right goodwill  
Would have lost them, every penny ;  
They backed Death, but I backed Phil.

Suddenly he darted forward,  
And we knew that all was well,  
As he left behind his rival,  
Passed the winning-post—and fell.

White and still—we rushed to aid him ;  
Nay, but he had need of none.  
Death was nearer him than Murray,  
Pressed him hard, but Phil had won !

## THE RIVER.

**A** CROSS the bridge here—that's my beat,

And two miles farther west.

Above, there's the eternal street,

But right below is rest !

And the river looks like an old friend

That's always waiting there,—

When there's no hope that things will mend,—

To save one from despair.

Why it has made my eyes grow dim,

The murmur of its tide—

Like a kindly voice to welcome him

That has no friend beside !

All dark and stained and ruined here—

But not more dark than we !

Plashing so gently by the pier,

Away down to the sea.

And I think, when life has no more part

For one so tired and base,

The river and I'll go heart to heart

To our last resting-place.

JIM.

AND so you say, if I forsake  
My sins, the Lord 'll see  
A real good berth, and no mistake,  
Just fitted up for me !  
No more hard times. Well, I may own,  
This life does well enough—  
But when a chap is breaking down,  
He feels it a bit rough !

But I'd forgotten, do you know—  
My pardner—dead, sir, now—  
He got killed just a year ago  
In a blind drunken row.  
They held an inquest over him  
Before the funeral.  
He couldn't keep off drink, could Jim,  
But he was a good pal !

What's come of Jim ? You say again,  
Repent and take to prayer,  
And save your precious soul ! But then  
Jim always used to swear,

---

And fight, and neyer touched a track  
If this life ain't the whole,  
Must say it looks uncommon black  
For Jim's unfortnet soul.

Down on his luck he is ! I hate  
To think as times won't mend  
For Jim. He'd like to see a mate  
Down yonder, you depend !  
I'll jine him if I drink and play,  
Just keep on in the wrong—  
I seem to hear the old chap say :  
“Wot, pardner, you along !”

Yes, now I'm running down, maybe  
It might be in my line,  
Rest for the weary—but, you see,  
Jim was a pal of mine !  
Just put it to the Lord, up there,  
How I'd have come to Him,  
Seeing He spoke so on the square,—  
If it hadn't been for Jim !

## THE CAPTAIN'S DREAM.

**H**E looked somewhat crazed, the Captain,  
With his singular, rapt face ;  
And his eyes had a strange lustre,  
Which was the result of grace.

He was very safe for glory,  
But he didn't seem to care,  
Said he wouldn't be contented  
If the whole world wasn't there.

For his watchword was Salvation,  
And he seemed to find a spark  
Of a soul in every sinner,  
Though they strove to keep it dark.

Till one day, Death's hand upon him,  
His fierce ardour sought to break—  
Laid him low in the poor attic  
He had lived in for our sake.

Came a night when we stood watching,  
Two or three about him there—  
Suddenly he bid us bear him  
Just to breathe the cool night air.

---

So we took the dying Captain  
To the window, moving slow;  
For we feared his heart would fail him  
At the evil sight below.

It was drawing on to midnight,  
The New Cut was at its worst,  
Just a maze of drunken clamour,  
God-forsaken and accursed.

And the yellow lamps were flaring  
High, through that strange market place—  
But there fell another lustre  
On the Captain's wasted face.

Ay, and from the garret window,  
As he looked into the town,  
He beheld another city,  
Where the stream of life ran down.

And he murmured, looking downward :  
“ In fine linen, clean and white,  
Multitude which none can number,  
And the Lord God is their light ”.



## SHALL WE MEET BEYOND THE RIVER?

**I**NTOLERABLE, by none wanted  
Save by himself alone;  
It seemed a satire that he chanted  
In quavering doleful tone.  
The heart of many a generous giver  
From such a discord swerved;  
Philanthropists beyond the River,  
Mayhap, are tougher-nerved.

We could not choose but be exclusive,  
Whose souls are unlike his :  
His fellowship were not conducive  
To our eternal bliss.  
The small dog, left to prowl and shiver,  
Is the one living thing  
Would care to meet beyond the River  
His master wandering.

Ay, the old circle that befriended,  
The love that could not change,  
We would recover, all else ended—  
If heaven should thus arrange.

But *him*, whose accents no more quiver  
Through thoroughfares we shun,  
We would leave to God, beyond the River,  
As we on earth have done.

Unless the sins that never tempted,  
Sins we could scarce condone,  
Trials from which we were exempted  
By man's voice and our own,  
Evil from which we did deliver  
Our souls, and want, and care,  
Should meet us yet beyond the River,  
And bid us welcome there !

## FANTASIES.

### AFTER THE BATTLE.

“ **O**H WHERE art thou bound, my king,  
On this stormy sea ?  
Now the clouds are gathering,  
And the wind is free.

“ Now for thee the people wait  
With thy diadem.  
Thou shalt pass the city gate  
And reign over them.”

“ I shall never sceptre hold,  
And for me no crown,  
Where the palace gleaming gold  
O'er the sea looks down.

“ I have worn my armour long,  
Now my hurt I find ;  
But the sea shall make me strong,  
And the rushing wind.

“ There shall none go forth with me,  
Warrior or friend.

“ King, but I will follow thee  
To the very end.

“ Wholly scatheless have I passed  
Through the battle dread ?  
But the banner I held fast  
Broken is and red.

“ By the banner that I bore,  
By the battle’s strain,  
When thou goest forth once more  
I will not remain.

“ For me also calls the sea,  
And I may not stay,  
And the strong winds welcome me —  
Let us hence away ! ”



## THE CRUSADER.

**F**IVE centuries and over,  
I've lain here all alone,  
A battered old crusader,  
Upon my bed of stone.  
Five centuries and over,  
In darkness, dust, and cold :  
Yet I'm a true crusader,  
A loyal knight and bold.

I am so used to silence  
I never make a sound,  
I never stir my armour  
Nor call my faithful hound.  
I was a doughty warrior,  
Yet tranquilly I lie,  
I hear the organ thunder,  
I see the folk go by.

---

The loveliest maiden passes  
Like sunshine down the aisle,  
As she goes through the transept  
I watch her all the while.  
The people turn and whisper,  
So beautiful is she—  
I'm only an old crusader,  
And no one cares for me.

The niche is very narrow,  
The church is very old,  
The world is very evil,  
Continually we're told.  
The centuries pass slowly,  
But through them all I know  
I'm still a true crusader,  
And ready for the foe.

But there's a festal Sunday,  
Of all the Sundays king,  
When like a vast wave breaking  
The choir begin to sing  
Of glorious resurrection,  
Of some great day unknown,  
When every old crusader  
Shall break his bonds of stone.

He shall hear through aisles and arches,  
Beyond the city wall,  
The sound of a mighty army,  
The long, long, trumpet call ;  
And closer gird his armour,  
And grasp his sword and shield,  
And through the shadowy transept  
March to the battle-field.

## TWO DEMOCRATS.

**F**OR concord have the nations striven  
In lavishing their gain :  
But human brotherhood is given  
Only by love and pain.

There were two democrats went forth  
To the wide world's release,  
And they went east, and south, and north,  
To give the people peace.

On the vast multitude each wrought  
His will, to bless or ban ;  
And one bore gold, and one a thought  
Deep in the heart of man.

I wis they ne'er returned again  
To their own mountain side,  
For one was made a king of men,  
And one was crucified.

And yet the ages rolling down  
Confirm the gain and loss—  
Since one for ever bears the crown,  
And one endures the cross.

And yet the rolling ages this  
Eternal message bring—  
The king of men a vassal is,  
The crucified a king.

### THE BIRD OF PARADISE.

“ **O**H whither, wanderer, this bleak  
And stormy way dost fare ? ”  
“ **T**he Bird of Paradise I seek,  
I find not anywhere.

“ **B**ut when its wings sweep through the heaven  
Sorrow and anger cease,  
It is the bird that God hath given  
Joy, and eternal peace.

“ **T**here’s a great vulture grim and grey  
About my pathway flies.  
That evil vulture doth affray  
The Bird of Paradise.

“ **I**t is the vilest of all things  
That ever yet drew breath.  
The tremor of its hideous wings  
Into the air fans death ! ”

“ **O**h, smooth its plumage grey and dim,  
And look into its eyes !  
It is no hooded vulture grim,  
But the Bird of Paradise ! ”

---

He smoothed its plumes, and close he drew  
The hooded bird, and kissed.  
A shudder of death went through and through  
His being, ere he wist.

Again his foe he looked upon,  
And kissed, without a word,  
But with a sudden lustre shone  
The plumage of the bird.

White grew his lips and deadly cold—  
He kissed it once again.  
It was a bird of heavenly mould  
Flew forth all glorious then.

He watched it with his dying eyes,  
Up to the sun it fled.  
Faded the Bird of Paradise—  
Tranquil, the boy lay dead.

## THE DESERTER.

YOU know the story of the pass ?  
Twenty men held it, till the grass  
Ran down with blood, and one  
By one they dropped down in the place,  
And the night covered each still face,  
Where was none living, none.

A score of heroes ! and one more,  
Who was no hero, but before  
The fight, forsook his post,  
Struck with unutterable dread,  
And from that pass of death he fled,  
And from the conquering host.

• • • • •  
All night they lay there, sleeping on  
In the dark ravine ; but when lone  
The dawn broke in the sky  
O'er their great quietness, who kept  
So strange a guard, a shadow crept  
Out of the wood hard by.

As moving in a dream he drew  
Nearer and nearer yet, till through  
The silent camp he passed.

Each man had many wounds. He gazed  
On eyes unseeing now and glazed,  
And knew them to the last.

Then once more sought the wood, and hewed  
From a tree fallen there, a rude  
High wooden cross, with his  
Bright sword, and through the blood-stained moss  
Drove it, and cut upon the cross :  
"God's soldiers". Only this.

And then another cross he wrought,  
Shaped yet more roughly, that he brought  
Some distance from the slain,  
And thrust into the soil, and cut  
There : "God's deserter". Then he put  
A bullet through his brain.

## THE DIVINING STONE.

### I.

“ **O**VER the desert ride, ride on,  
    To the sun,  
As already the year were gone,  
    Journey done.

“ One voice echoing o'er and o'er,  
    And one name,  
Love for ever at the heart's core,  
    Like a flame.

“ And the words through my being burn,  
    Light and heat—  
Love, in a year I shall return,  
    Riding fleet.

“ Now the minutes tell out the year  
    Ceaselessly,  
But already your spirit here  
    Rides with me.

“ Nought can sunder a faith so deep,  
Though the stars  
Rushed together to mould and heap  
Prison bars.

“ Still your spirit with mine should meet,  
Worlds between.  
Still as my heart your heart should beat,  
Oh my Queen ! ”

## II.

“ What dost thou here, thou wizard strange,  
And alone ? ”  
“ I see all life and death and change  
In my stone.

“ Like clouds they gather and they merge,  
Part and fall.  
Farther than Time’s remotest verge,  
One are all.

“ I see the one thou mayst not see,  
Rider fleet !  
I see thy fate press after thee  
With dull feet.

“Wouldst thou look down into the deep  
Of the stone—  
Her soul and thine indeed should keep  
Tryst unknown ! ”

He looked far down into the clear  
Sea of blue ;  
And there was no more far or near—  
And he knew !

III.

“Heart’s love, what dost thou look upon  
Fearfully ? ”  
“It was as though a blight fell on  
Sky and sea !

“It was as though some anguish sore  
Cried to save—  
That now is past for evermore,  
Like a wave ! ”

## VOYAGING.

“ **O**H whither sail ye, mariners,  
Over the sullen sea ?  
Now gathering mist the sunshine blurs,  
And in the north a tempest stirs,  
And a frail boat have ye ! ”

“ Oh, north or south, or east or west,  
We see no earthly sun ;  
And storms are ripples on the breast  
Of the deep sea where all boats rest,  
And still God’s will be done ! ”

“ Oh, mariners, did ye not hear  
That wild, despairing cry ? ”  
“ As we strove hard to row and steer,  
It seemed there fell upon the ear  
A psalm of victory ! ”

“ Oh, mariners, right near to you  
There sank a vessel fair.  
Saw ye the faces of the crew ?  
For surely it was one ye knew,  
That whitened with despair.”

“ There passed a golden galleon,  
With music and with song ;  
Its deck the sunshine fell upon—  
Over one face, a glory shone,  
That had been weary long ! ”

## THE VICTOR.

“ **O** CONQUEROR in a deadly field,  
With banner red and torn,  
Now we fling garlands on thy shield,  
Through the long battle borne,  
Who hast fought on and wouldest not yield,  
Even from the breaking morn !

“ And men shall hymn thy victory  
In the strong chants of old,  
From every home of harmony  
The mighty anthem's rolled ;  
The song goes up into the sky,  
And on the stars takes hold.

“ Oh why so mute, great conqueror,  
And why so deathly pale ?  
We watched thee through the battle sore,  
And thou didst never quail—  
Who shalt have honour evermore,  
And evermore prevail.

“ The flying hosts thy fame could quell  
Were not so wan as thou !  
The blossoms on thy shield that fell  
Are faded—on thy brow  
Thou hast no mien invincible,  
Oh mighty victor, now ! ”

## II.

“ Nay, let the music fail, the choir  
For ever cease to sing—  
And kindle no victorious fire,  
And no more garlands bring.  
There is one thing that I desire—  
To rest from conquering.

“ I know I waged the battle well ;  
I never flinched for fear.  
Too long I fought the hosts of hell  
With this poor earthly spear.  
Only the human heart could tell  
The victory was so dear.

“ I have been faithful, the long fight,  
And it is all gone by.  
I strove against the gods for light ;  
Now let the twilight die.  
The shadow of a starless night  
Grows deeper in the sky.”



## PROBLEMS.

### A LEADER.

**H**OW many votes we won him, I and you,  
All through the twenty years !  
He ranked us foremost of his "faithful few,"  
I think almost with tears  
In his deep voice magnetic ! The tide turned :  
We followed, just the same.  
But he somehow left us to what thanks we earned,  
And left the losing game !

One day we met him, when our suits had grown  
Rusty and green with care—  
But he knew us ! At the Judgment he will own  
That he was well aware  
He cut us dead ! A merciful relief  
From long suspense, 'tis true,  
But yet—hard lines upon us. Poor old chief—  
It was harder upon you !

He knew it was too late to make amends  
With his whole interest,  
That some men only will take help from *friends*,  
Even if he did his best !  
So he did nothing—but I think, that day,  
He'd maybe murmur low—  
A bitter thing for any man to say—  
“ They'd not have served *me* so ! ”

There are some faces much too fine for lies !  
And yet they can lie on,  
While seeming all deception to despise ;  
And there are tones have gone  
To deepest hell to pluck their meaning out,  
And highest heaven, and thence  
Drawn a nobility one cannot doubt,  
Like God's own evidence !

What does it all mean ? So *he* looked and spoke,  
“ A full assurance,” thus ;  
And yet our hearts, not his own heart, he broke—  
And that is curious !  
‘ Put not your trust in princes ! ” yet “ Be strong,  
Have faith in God ! ” men said.  
But no ! The whole is wrong if one thing's wrong,  
All faith if one faith's dead !



---

Those who begin by finding God unjust,  
In man, will ne'er win through,  
Those who believe in God may put their trust  
In princes, ay, and do !  
An idol never yet had feet of clay !  
It is no starting point  
To turn to the Creator, and to say :  
“ The world is out of joint ! ”

Rather : “ O God, our hero looks a lie,  
And yet *is* true, we vow,  
In earth or heaven—since we would gladly die  
To serve him, even now ! ”  
Why, one would give a novelist more scope  
Than we give God ! Things look  
Black in the introduction—but we hope,  
We trust ! Put by the book !

## THE MATERIALIST.

**S**O, here is the neural matter,  
Life's frail citadel.  
This the brain that men would flatter  
    Since it wrought so well,  
Never lagging, never hastening,  
    Always true and keen.  
Pity for it to lie wasting,  
    The superb machine !

Here's the neural matter, brothers,  
    Woefully amiss !  
In the age now dawning, others  
    May have dealt with this.  
Could they backward turn their vision  
    To this deathbed—how  
Quickly, with what calm precision,  
    They might heal one, now !

Truth—no coward she engages,  
    And she shows no ruth.  
Shall we quarrel with her wages,  
    We who follow truth ?

All the guerdon of her giving,  
Utter ignorance—  
Better that, than trading, living  
On whate'er main chance !

Well I know your sweet tradition  
Of the prayer and hymn—  
Truth was a far fairer vision  
To these eyes now dim !  
Let them keep their faith's strong cheering  
In the flood unknown  
She and I alone are nearing,  
Who have journeyed lone.

These few moments of reflection—  
Could one only find  
Something of the true connection  
Between nerve and mind !  
Still the old blank wall deriding,  
Where it stood of yore—  
All I know, the link dividing,  
For one more !

## FATALISM.

“ **O** F sin and shame, and turpitude  
    Why should I bear the cost,  
In infinite, eternal Good  
    If woe and pain are lost ?

“ **B**lind is my anguish of remorse,  
    If even my sins fulfil,  
Ay, and all sinning in its course,  
    The universal will.”

“ **N**ay, greater blindness is in thee,  
    Because thou wouldest be freed  
From shame by pleading God’s decree—  
    Shame also is decreed.

“ **N**o universal consciousness  
    One duty can impair—  
Though all guilt be of God, no less  
    Its end, for man, despair.

“ **F**ull well thou knowest in thy heart,  
    Wholly to make divine  
The universe, it is God’s part,  
    But it is also thine.”



## LOVE AND MATTER.

YOU souls of ours, that loved, reflected,  
Thought all worth while, and spared no pain—  
Indissolubly thus connected  
With body, and with nerve and brain—  
Toil on, grieve on, love on, no longer,  
A little while, and you shall be  
No faithfuller, nor any stronger,  
Than murmurs of the wind and sea..

For the grey matter you're enthroned in,  
As you remember, must disperse,  
And all its failures be condoned in  
The failure of the universe,  
Till the stars die, the sun is hidden,  
Till the last ray of light is shed,  
Perishes, to endure unbidden,  
All life, and God Himself is dead..

Therefore we pity God's endeavour,  
Because it never can create  
A spark of energy, nor sever  
Itself from its primeval fate.  
In matter's bonds there's no transcending,  
Bound as our own, Infinite Will—  
God pitied man once—*this* amending  
Surely is sadder, stranger still !

Yet, spite of frozen universes  
Somehow there seemed a mighty plan—  
One scarce need think the whole scheme worse is  
Than the poor part we know in man—  
The best of man is love, which sunder  
From thought of God, and all is vain.  
Yet if God also loved, what wonder  
If human loving should remain ?

What if this load neath which we falter,  
These crushing laws, beneath, above,  
Of time, change, death, we cannot alter,  
Were nothing but one way of love.  
What if all love, from the beginning  
Had only ceased for more love yet—  
What if we only lose in winning,  
Or in remembering, forget ?



We cannot draw aside that curtain,  
Veiling no finite mystery,  
And yet the worth of love is certain,  
For which men gladly dare to die—  
Who strive, who toil, their whole hearts spending,  
Then pass into the consciousness  
That of all love is source and ending—  
Without a fear of loving less !

## THE LIBRARY.

**A**BOVE each other, shelf on shelf,  
Are ranged the books he pondered on,  
He touched—the shadow of himself  
They almost seem, though he is gone.  
The books he loved, what are they now  
To him ? a symbol all forgot,  
A groping effort, quaint and slow,  
After what language knoweth not ?

Nay, this to us, so dark and dim,  
Like windows, ere the sun arise,  
Scarce touched with starlight ; but for him,  
He sees them now with other eyes.  
How changed, transformed, each word a song,  
What meaning where it all was blind,  
What wondrous right in what seemed wrong !  
A library—but God behind !

## ON THE WINDY SIDE OF CARE.

### THE FATAL LIFT.

#### PART I.

PRINCE PHILARETE<sup>1</sup> remained on high,  
The masses were below.  
This was the fact : the reason why  
Was what he wished to know.  
For book or playmate, game or skiff,  
He did not seem to care,  
He said he did not want them if  
The masses were not there.

An ancient sorcerer they sought,  
A sorcerer sublime :  
With magic were his accents fraught,  
His locks were grey with time.  
On Philarete he fixed a gaze  
Of patriarchal joy.  
“ Master, instruct me how to raise  
The masses,” said the boy.

<sup>1</sup> This name is from Henry Kingsley's *Boy in Grey*.

Serenely spake his wizard guest,  
And bowed his hoary head.

“I fancy that I can suggest  
A remedy,” he said.

“A lift, your Highness ! ” That was all.

“A lift ! ” cried Philarete,  
Letting his whole regalia fall  
At that magician’s feet.

And yet a faint surprise he knew.

The wizard’s speech, in sooth,  
Half like an ancient man’s, had too  
A certain air of youth.

And half of Henry George it seemed  
To his bewildered ear ;  
And half of Chamberlain he dreamed,  
And half of Bass’s beer.

And Philarete ’gan sore to quake

Lest he had asked amiss ;

And very fearfully he spake :

“Father, what lift is this ? ”

A Gladstone bag unlocked the sage,  
With many models packed.

He answered: “Lifts are all the rage,  
Yet only *one* will act ”.



---

The prince surveyed them with respect,  
    " Nirvana, Entrance Free,"  
There was one labelled. " Too select,"  
    The wizard said, " you see,  
The mystery we cannot guess  
    Of why it did not please,  
But they're returned, to their distress,  
    All to the patentees."

A tear of pride there dimmed his eyes :  
    " It won't be so with *this*,  
This will expand to any size,  
    It's warranted, *it is!*"  
There crossed his mind some memory old ;  
    He murmured : " You will win  
In the present world a hundredfold,  
    And the next world thrown in ! "

## PART II.

A mighty gathering there pressed  
    About the chasm's brink,  
Men felt a common interest  
    In seeing the lift sink.  
The wizard's portrait they had hung  
    On every gallery's wall :  
The priests, their benediction sung,  
    Strewed incense over all.

---

Yet as the chasm the lift received  
Before their very eyes,  
Only the sorcerer believed  
That it would ever rise.  
He peered into the darkness. Cheers  
Were hushed. All waited then,  
Reporters, artists, bishops, peers,  
And literary men.

But when they saw him turn and glare,  
Like one in sore distress,  
They asked him: "Are the masses there?"  
Wildly he answered: "Yes!"  
(He trembled like an aspen leaf,  
He's trembled ever since)—  
"But—this confounded lift, in brief,  
Sends them up Philistines!"

The artists sighed: "Too many, or"—  
The poets turned away.  
The bishops cried: "Excelsior!"  
But the archbishop: "Stay!"  
For learned he was in canon law,  
And in the old Greek text,  
And he by intuition saw  
Just what would happen next.

“ Too late ! ” the sorcerer replied,  
“ *They have all got to come !*  
Warranted *not* to stop,” he cried,  
“ Till the millennium !  
Unless ”—— He groaned and hid his face.  
The horror grew and grew ;  
And Philistines filled all the place,  
Repeating all they knew.

Prince Philarete gazed far and wide,  
It gave him little ease.  
“ Had we *no* Philistines,” he sighed,  
“ That ye must bring us these ? ”  
Then, ere the wizard’s fatal gift  
Another load conveyed,  
Prince Philarete upon the lift  
Sank, and the plague was stayed.

It rose, in vacancy complete.  
Sadly they murmured : “ So  
The masses and Prince Philarete  
Must both remain below ”.  
Though if you stand upon your feet  
Upon the moon, ‘tis said,  
The masses and Prince Philarete  
Will both be overhead.

## THE VISION OF NOAH.

**T**HE rising deluge he descried.  
He saw upon the foaming tide  
The nation's arks at random ride.

One ark came slow and heavily,  
By toiling swimmers on the sea  
Supported, as most arks must be.

It seemed unconscious of the flood,  
There sat within a multitude  
Discoursing on the public good.

No ark had some, nor aught unsound.  
Serenely upon higher ground  
They stood and waited to be drowned.

With pensive scrutiny remote  
They criticised each kind of boat,  
Remarking how it would not float.

Drowning was safer, they averred;  
In peaceful minor keys he heard  
Them murmur, drowning they preferred.

There braved the foaming flood's expanse,  
There took the waves with sprightly dance—  
The philosophical romance.

"If I might venture a remark,"  
He said, "a very pretty bark!  
But which is flood, and which is ark?"

Others, avoiding more and more  
All the weak points of arks of yore,  
Had built an ark without a door.

They clung to it in calm austere,  
Remarking: "It is very clear,  
The flood can never enter here!"

They passed him, fading into mist,  
There floated near him ere he wist  
The vessel of the Socialist.

A goodly, but confusing bark,  
A vision on the waters dark  
Of many doors without an ark.

Hard by a lurid vessel shone,  
That even as he looked thereon  
Swiftly exploded, and was gone !

A tear for memory he shed,  
He shook his patriarchal head,  
And "Give *me* gopherwood !" he said.

## A BONUS ON SOAP.

**A** LONE he stood before the pane,  
He let the crowd sweep by;  
But what in city stores could chain  
That gifted author's eye?

'Twas not the jam attracted it,  
The salmon, nor the spice.  
Above a keg of soap was writ  
The following advice:

*"Come hither, nor in darkness grope.  
Come hither—buy, peruse—  
The age's most superior soap  
And most enlightened views.*

*"New lustre on each countenance  
Touched by this soap you'll find;  
This philosophical romance  
Will kindle heart and mind.*

*“ Their hands were never half so clean,  
All customers agree,  
And their beliefs have never been  
So utterly at sea.*

*“ To spiritual heights you'll grow  
From which you'll ne'er descend.  
Such is the novel we bestow,  
The soap that we commend.”*

*“ What higher longing could be mine ? ”  
That author sighed. “ Enough !  
The higher life I intertwine  
With common household stuff.”*

*There dimmed his eye a happy tear :  
“ I have not lived amiss,  
That I should be so very near  
The nation's heart as this ! ”*

*He turned from that attractive sight,  
And noted, standing by,  
A threadbare and dejected wight,  
Who checked a heavy sigh.*

*“ Brother,” he said, “ a helping hand  
To soothe your grief permit :  
Humanity's my watchword, and  
You are a part of it.*



“A purer faith I might provide  
Upon this very spot.”  
That other pensively replied,  
“Thank you; I’d rather not.

“A momentary weakness shook  
My spirit, but is gone.  
*My* book wrapped up the soap *your* book  
Was made a bonus on !”

## A HYPNOTIC SUGGESTION.

### PART I.

**I**T was the wily Democrat  
Who occupied the house;  
His fiercest foes admitted that  
He had his share of *nous*.

Where was it now? "We have deplored  
His principles," said they,  
"But never been so wholly bored  
As we have been to-day."

Yet he spoke on. His gestures calm  
And vacant eye revealed  
No knowledge of what dreamy balm  
His hearers' senses sealed.

Yet ere the midnight clock had told  
Its numbers on the air,  
Before him, like some legend old,  
They all were slumbering there.



---

He gazed around. No member woke ;  
They sat and never stirred.  
Again he spoke, but *what* he spoke  
Only those members heard.

A smile that there was none to see  
Stole sweetly o'er his face.  
"A bloodless revolution !" he  
Remarked, and left the place.

## PART II.

A month rolled by. It was his use,  
Session by session, still  
With tranquil air to introduce  
One socialistic bill.

It seemed to bring millennial bliss  
For some brief seconds near ;  
It disestablished all that is  
And rectified the sphere.

Yet forth *en masse* the members filed,  
Each time, with artless glee ;  
Calmly the British public smiled :  
"The deluge—after me!"

Yet once again 'twas read. The new  
Reporter's heart stood still:  
The Premier—could it be true?—  
In favour of the bill!

“ Our race's empty honours hide  
Our true nobility.  
My fatherland, accept,” he cried,  
“ My wealth, my peerage—Me! ”

Wildly they cheered; but more intense  
The thrill of pride that ran  
Through the impassioned audience  
As rose the Grand Old Man.

Slowly he raised his axe, and said,  
His voice suffused with tears:  
“ This, this shall earn my frugal bread  
In my declining years! ”

Into the lobby whoso viewed  
Them press had dreamed there passed  
The Universal Brotherhood—  
While states hypnotic last—

Rank, learning, wealth, each virtue that  
A realm could e'er supply—  
Among the rest a Democrat,  
With bland but vacant eye.



## THE LEGEND OF J. J. JACKSON THE SELF-MADE MAN.

**H**E stood upon the bartizan  
Of his new fangled tower,  
The proudest and self-madest man  
The moon beheld that hour.

He thought on how he'd made his way,  
On what he'd been before,  
And dreamily he murmured: "J.  
J. Jackson". Nothing more.

There was no echo that replied,  
Yet his low tone, I wis,  
Like a strange summons, seemed to glide  
Through all the edifice.

He gazed around, his blood ran cold.  
What sight could thus appal?  
Himself in fresco as of old?  
*But it had left the wall.*

Costly medallions, busts of clay,  
Came looming on afar,  
And drearily he murmured: "J.  
J. Jackson. Here we are!"

Some baneful influence down the stair  
His heavy steps impelled.  
At every stage, the Jackson there  
The ghostly concourse swelled.

The green bronze Jackson leaves his stand,  
The green bronze Jackson walks!  
The water-colour Jackson, and  
A Jackson done in chalks!

The drawing-room, wide open set,  
His frenzied glance surveyed.  
The Parian Jackson statuette  
Was taking off his shade.

Only with bland, benignant air  
The portrait hung the same—  
And yet, a form one would not care  
To meet *without* his frame.

Jackson in oils, life size, and all  
Complete. He looked once more.  
The frame alone was on the wall,  
The portrait on the floor.

He counted by the moonlight's ray  
The foes he sought to shun,  
And bitterly he moaned: "Twelve J.  
J. Jacksons against one!"

He turned in mortal horror, yet  
One hope he pondered o'er.  
"At least," he muttered, "I can get  
Before them to the door!"

Then faltered with a look of dread:  
"The Statue!" That was all.  
His alabaster arms outspread  
The Jackson in the hall.

He clasped him in the moonlight grey,  
He banged him on the floor,  
He laughed a marble laugh, and J.  
J. Jackson was no more!

And lo! the grisly murmurs run  
From floor to bartizan:  
"Why are so many portraits done  
Of any self-made man?"

### A THEORY.

**W**HY do violins shudder so,  
When across them is drawn the bow,  
Sob for anguish and wild despair ?  
Human souls are imprisoned there.

Souls are shut in the violins,  
They are the souls of Philistines ;  
But the Philistines, row on row,  
Soulless sit and they do not know.

But they brandish their eye-glasses,  
Stare at each other's evening dress,  
Scrutinise form or brilliant hue,  
Say : " Is it rouge or is it true ? "

" Some one was flat a semitone,  
And how stout the soprano's grown !  
Isn't the bass a dear ? and oh,  
Do look at Mrs. So-and-so ! "

Still the musicians play serene,  
As though Philistines had not been,  
But their souls in the violins  
Mourn on bitterly for their sins,

Call them wildly and call in pain,  
Call them with longing deep and vain,  
And with infinite tenderness,  
Since they can give them no redress.

Since not one of them is aware,  
Here is he and his soul is *there*,  
In the music's divinest chord,  
Making melody to the Lord.

So how often in life and art  
Soul and body must dwell apart—  
Great is the master's soul, no doubt—  
Twenty Philistines go without.

Are we body or are we soul ?  
Little matter upon the whole.  
Human soul in the violin,  
Save me at last, a Philistine !

## FAIRIES AND THE PHILOLOGIST.

**A**BOUT his pillow he was ware,  
I' the watches o' the night,  
Of shining elves and ladies fair,  
And knights in armour bright.

And drowsily he thought : “ I know  
Exactly what you are—  
You're parables of sun and snow,  
And moon and sky and star ”.

But presently a doubtful awe  
Disturbed his idle scorn ;  
For each familiar face he saw  
Was sorrowful and worn.

Ladies and wizards, knights and elves,  
They moaned : “ Bad luck to *you*,  
We only know we're not ourselves,  
We cannot tell who's who ”.

The enchanted prince, at Beauty's side,  
Seemed solacing her ire.  
“ Too bad,” dejectedly he cried :  
“ One of you calls her Fire ;

" And there's another calls her Snow ;  
She says, till she is told  
Her meaning, how is she to know  
If she is hot or cold ? "

With weary steps they wandered by :  
" We were quite wrong," they said.  
" You're not a prince—not Beauty I ;  
We might as well be dead ! "

Slowly dispersed the vanquished throng,  
Faded the raiment bright ;  
It was as though a mournful song  
Came floating through the night.

" We're dead and gone. Our stories grew  
From how our names were spelt.  
If some one made a myth of *you*,  
You'd find out how it felt.

" 'Tis all in vain. We're Dawn *or* Day,  
We're Sun *or* Sea *or* Air.  
Only—you might have let us stay  
Till you knew *what* we were."

## TOO MANY STARS.

“ **I**T is the stars,” the poet said,  
The stars, Astrology replies,  
That still control the paths we tread,  
That warn, that comfort, or advise.  
For weal or woe, our fates must be  
Linked to their unrelenting cars.  
“ It is the stars.” For luckless me,  
Alas, it is too many stars !

I'd like a planet of my own,  
A steadfast planet, calm and clear,  
To tell me what to leave alone,  
And in what course to persevere.  
Ah, when the truth I'd ascertain,  
So hopelessly their orbits mix,  
I think in my bewildered brain  
There *never* can be less than six !

If Mercury my brain inspires  
To art, to eloquence or song,  
Or Jupiter my spirit fires  
With purpose or ambition strong,

Then darts the moon a chilling beam,  
The cadent moon, my constant foe,  
Or Saturn, with his deadly gleam,  
Enters my House to work me woe.

All peaceful moments to disperse  
That *one* mild planet seeks to sway,  
They come, my stellar arbiters,  
Some new "conjunction" to display.  
My fate each hastens to decide,  
They scent the battle from afar.  
I know, not one is satisfied !  
I wish I had a *single* star !

Oh, if the stars would smoothly run,  
And still among themselves agree,  
And make their aim a common one,  
How different the world would be !  
Man with a single star might cope,  
A Venus, Mercury, or Mars,  
But bitter is the horoscope  
Determined by too many stars !

## ETHER INSATIABLE.

**N**OW Energy's bound to diminish—  
The harder she struggles and moils,  
The faster she speeds to the finish,  
The end of her infinite toils.  
A million of planets beneath her  
Strong hands she may mould or efface—  
'Tis all to the good of the ether,  
That fills circumambient space !

All's quietly caught up and muffled  
By a strange and intangible foe,  
The ether serene and unruffled,  
The ether we see not nor know.  
Life, radiance, in torrents dispelling,  
The universe spins to its goal ;  
And radiance and life find *one* dwelling—  
This ether's the tomb of the whole.

There is not a hushed malediction,  
There is not a smile or a sigh,  
But aids in dispersing, by friction,  
The cosmical heat in the sky ;

---

And whether a star falls, or whether  
A heart breaks—for stars and for men  
Their labour is all for the ether,  
That renders back nothing again.

And we, howsoever we hated  
And feared, or made love, or believed,  
For all the opinions we stated,  
The woes and the wars we achieved,  
We, too, shall lie idle together,  
In very uncritical case—  
And no one will win—but the ether,  
That fills circumambient space !

## THE FATAL ADVERTISEMENTS.

FROM all the sphere of Mars they pressed,  
The wonder to inspect—  
A telescope, the mightiest  
A planet could erect.

And the two chief astronomers  
Controlled the huge machine,  
And first of all the universe  
They sought our orb terrene.

Possessed of water, warmth, and air,  
Our planet they could show ;  
But who enjoyed these blessings there  
Was that they wished to know.

And had the sphere whereon they gazed  
Returned a glance or thought,  
What mighty problems had it raised,  
And what solutions brought ?

The elder first our orb discerned,  
And gazed ; and by his mien,  
When mute with ecstasy he turned,  
They knew that he had seen.

---

“It speaks, it speaks!” he cried at last,  
“That highly favoured sphere!  
But is,” he said, “the problem vast,  
Or the solution, here?”

Then in exultant, anxious awe,  
While all the throng were dumb,  
He traced the characters he saw,  
The sign “Linoleum”.

Tears rose in eyes unused to weep,  
The portent as they scanned.  
All felt some meaning dread and deep,  
But did not understand.

They said: “Strange undulations roll  
Of cosmic woe and bliss.  
New darkness dawns upon the soul  
From gloomy galaxies.”

Then, altering the field of view  
A trifle ere he gazed,  
The next astronomer looked through,  
And started back amazed.

“A new solution I discern,”  
He cried. “The old must go.”  
Slowly he copied in his turn  
The sign “Sapolio”.

No farther they could contemplate ;  
A meteor—alas,  
That it arrived a little late !—  
Shattered the mighty glass.

But trouble gathered in the stars,  
Confusion, doubt, and dread,  
And from the tranquil realm of Mars  
Tranquillity had fled.

And some professed to know, and some  
Professed they did not know ;  
And some maintained Linoleum,  
And some Sapolio.

But ere the whole discussion passed,  
Each zealous faction wrote  
Its watchword, graved in letters vast,  
For other orbs to note.

And future spheres will sure behold,  
When pondering on the stars,  
Two signs imprinted on the cold,  
Dejected sphere of Mars.

The strife of cycles long ago  
Will be no longer dumb.  
Some will maintain Sapolio,  
And some Linoleum.

## A WARNING TO NEW WORLDS.

YOU far-off star serene and cold,  
You've lived through cycles more than we :  
In you the mystery is unrolled  
    Right to the end, whate'er it be.  
What light would on our darkness rise,  
    Could we observe your bleak expanse,  
Know why you left, all coldly wise,  
    The shining stellar dance !

Ah, could some kindly messenger  
    The lesson of your life rehearse,  
He might remark, to Jupiter :—  
    “ Beware of changing bad for worse..  
The ills of incandescence bear,  
    Firmly a solid crust refuse.  
Of protoplasm never dare  
    The use or the abuse ! ”

What havoc saved among the stars  
That did not rush upon their fate !  
Too late for Venus and for Mars,  
For *this* poor planet, all too late—  
Star militant among the spheres,  
A star with many woes oppressed,  
Who now the unknown watchword hears  
That passes to the rest.

Ere Being's germ the strong sun bears,  
Ours shall have fled, for good and all,  
*This* luckless planet, from its cares  
Voices of fate already call,  
And year by year to rest it wins.  
How many a millennium  
Before the Sun *his* life begins,  
With all his woes to come !

Too late for even the youngest star,  
When nebulae, as it appears,  
Without premeditation are  
Condensing into rising spheres,  
And *they* will follow the old plan,  
Will name their system as they pass,  
The system that in gas began,  
And that will end in gas.

---

*They* are no politician's care,  
No missionary travels through  
The gaseous vapours that prepare  
New worlds, new woes, for races new.  
Philanthropists, ye do your best.  
One world—how many worlds there be !  
Convert the masses ; but arrest,  
Arrest the nebulae !

### A LESSON OF LIFE.

A long day's journey there lay before ;  
I crossed the meadow at breaking morn ;  
I saw the road wind by hill and moor—  
Beyond the hills was my distant bourne.

I thought of the greeting I should win—  
What was it moaned at my feet, meanwhile ?  
A poor old terrier, lame and thin :  
I stooped, and helped him over the stile.

Then would have crossed ; but a dreary yelp  
Arrested me, and I turned, to view  
A limping poodle whose need of help  
Was manifest : and I helped him too.

Of every nation and tribe are they,  
And each has a fresh, resistless wile ;  
Each says in his own peculiar way :  
“ Just help a lame dog over the stile ! ”

They're greyhound, Skye, Pomeranian ;  
They limp along in an endless file ;  
They're smooth or curly, they're black and tan,  
They *all* are lame and would cross the stile.

---

The shadows deepen o'er hill and glen,  
Dim is my pathway of many a mile—  
Yet will I renew my journey when  
The last lame dog is over the stile.

## IN THE TOY SHOP.

THE child had longings all unspoken—  
She was a naughty child.  
She had “a will that must be broken”;  
Her brothers drove her wild.  
She read the tale, but skipped the moral.  
She thought: “One *might* be good,  
If one could never scream and quarrel,  
If one were only wood ! ”

Meanwhile the doll: “Ah, fatal chasm !  
Although I’ve real curls,  
I am not made of protoplasm,  
Like other little girls.  
You see on every wooden feature  
My animation’s nil.  
How nice to be a human creature,  
Get cross, and have a will ! ”

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And what may be the real issue  
There's none hath understood ;  
But some of us are nervous tissue,  
And some of us are wood.  
And some to suffering, striving wildly,  
Are never quite resigned ;  
While we of wood yet murmur mildly  
At being left behind.

## LOOKING FOR PERU.

### BALLAD OF PERU.

HE'S voyaged to a foreign land,  
I have her photograph ;  
And she keeps half a sixpence, and  
I keep the other half—  
A land where golden rivers burn,  
And jewels lie like dew ;  
And either one day she'll return,  
Or I shall seek Peru.

She'd come with necklaces of pearls,  
And silken gown ; and she  
Would outdo all the other girls,  
The girl who crossed the sea—  
Only she can't be lovelier,  
Whatever she may do—  
I'd never be surprised at her  
Returning from Peru !

Suppose she's made a queen. Suppose  
She's princess, all the time.  
Such things may happen—no one knows,  
In that strange golden clime.  
I grind, and then the fellows say  
I moon. That isn't true.  
It's only, in a general way,  
I'm looking for Peru.

Suppose she's held in durance drear  
In some Peruvian tower  
(And therefore cannot write): Each year  
I'm growing old—each hour.  
I'll take my sword like some good knight,  
I'll take a trusty crew:  
I'll man a ship with banners bright,  
And so I'll reach Peru.

No doubt they'll try to keep them shut,  
(The donjon doors between)  
Her band of swarthy gaolers; but  
They'll tremble at my mien  
And flashing rapier, and fall back.  
Calmly shall I pursue  
My path, and hear her say: "So, Jack,  
At last you've found Peru!"

ENVOY.

We've done with grammars and with toys,  
We con our ledgers o'er,  
Or grapple with life's problems ; boys  
We never shall be more.  
And yet perchance 'twould raise a smile,  
If anybody knew  
How many of us, half the while,  
Are looking for Peru !

## THE RIDE.

**D**O you recollect the August day  
We rode so far and we rode so fast,  
And only the sunset bade us stay—  
    We rode together, first time and last ?  
Now, even now in my dreams, the same  
    Wild, reckless gallop again we urge.  
The sun is sinking, a ball of flame,  
    To the far horizon's level verge.

And on we fleet through the deepening glow,  
    The rose of the sunset on your face,  
And the breeze about us as we go.  
    Our horses' hoofs in the tireless race  
Make maddening music as we ride.  
    We never speak though we ride so near,  
Though the windy plain is lone and wide,  
    And only the wind could ever hear.

You do not turn and you do not tire :  
So lightly your bridle rein you hold :  
Your windblown hair by the sunset fire  
Is touched with glimmers of ruddy gold.  
Right on you look at the flushing west,  
And peace is mine at my being's core,  
Because I know that I love you best  
For ever and ever and evermore !

## THE PAGE OF LANCELOT.

**S**O I arm thee for the final night,  
And for thy one defeat ;  
For God upon his side shall fight  
When thou and he shall meet.  
I know, for good or evil, thine  
Will be a well-fought field—  
For good or evil, master mine,  
If I may bear thy shield !

Now art thou the unfaithfullest  
Of all that bore the vow—  
Yet some there are that love thee best,  
Most honour, even now.  
I see the face I held divine  
Ah, yet divine revealed !  
For good or evil, master mine,  
If I may bear thy shield !

## COMPENSATION.

YOU could not love me if you knew  
    The load of guilt I'm hampered by.  
A life so sin-stained through and through  
    Must give all love the lie.  
Then hate me, for your own soul's sake,  
    Or scorn, or utterly forget—  
I know my heart will never break,  
    While I can love you yet !



## DREAMS.

THINK not, if I look glad and proud,  
My grief I fear to own,  
Nor call me lonely, in the crowd,  
If I should stand alone.  
You know not, when the throng departs,  
How sure and speedily  
My only love, my heart of hearts,  
Draws near to welcome me.  
Nearer than touch of hand on hand,  
Nearer than sight or sound—  
And in the darkness of the land,  
We two are homeward bound.

Or when the autumn sunset dies,  
I see the light withdrawn,  
I see the pale, pure glow that lies  
On meadow, grove and lawn.  
Such deathless memories renew,  
And free the heart from care,  
So strange and sweet a life thrills through  
The unsubstantial air,

Should the hush deepen into all  
That one would see or hear,  
It could not be more magical,  
Or more exceeding dear.

Or when a shadowy starlight holds  
The land, the dreaming shore,  
When mystery the heart enfolds,  
As night the world broods o'er,  
Then in the wandering wind I feel  
Your thoughts about me stir,  
A deeper faith could naught reveal,  
Or a love loyaller.  
So ever with my spirit be,  
One with the wind and air,  
Till through the great eternity  
Together we shall fare !

AVE.

If I had only heaven, where you  
Might abide,  
I would give you meadows to wander through  
Green and wide,  
Flush of sunset, and hill and moor,  
The great sea  
Breaking on some beloved shore  
Timelessly.

Could you fancy—with such quick breath  
On you pressed—  
You should ever, in life, not death,  
Be at rest?  
Rest as deep as the joy is deep  
That you gain,  
Rest in a toil divine—not sleep,  
Yet not pain!

You should love with the love we proved  
Unsurpassed.

You should be loved as you have loved,  
Then, at last.

Where's the power to fulfil the plan ?  
Not in me.

Yet if God love as mortals can  
This may be !

## THE MAGIC MIRROR.

DIM clouds across the field there float,  
And shadows slowly form, combine,  
And gather shape. A tiny boat  
I see, tossed in the foaming brine.  
O rower, wait ! Brave rower, stay !  
Nay, boat and rower fade away.

Again the dim clouds gather o'er,  
And slowly shape a battle-field,  
And, dead or living, wounded sore,  
One lies beside a broken shield.  
O warrior, canst thou heed or hear ?  
Nay, for the visions disappear.

Fling down the shining surface bare ;  
An idle tale it tells to me.  
The shadowy form I image there  
I trace in earth and air and sea.  
Earth, sea, and air, from pole to pole,  
The magic mirror of my soul !

### SONG.

**S**O silently we anchor weighed,  
Stole out into the foam ;  
Mine eyes were on my helmsman stayed,  
And all the world was home.

Now o'er the sea there is no path,  
And no star in the sky,  
And no more place that helmsman hath  
Save in my memory.

Oh, best belovèd ancient house—  
Here in these far-off seas  
The waves go singing like the boughs  
Of your green chestnut trees.

I see them watching at the gate,  
As striving to recall  
A step that comes not, though they wait  
Far through the evenfall.

For the winds blow infinitely wide  
Of the home where I would sleep—  
Shoreless and fathomless the tide  
That hath me in its keep.

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## WHITE HEATHER.

O 'ER the moor we walked together,  
Rose-red like a shoaling sea—  
We were looking for white heather,  
Ne'er a tuft found we.  
From their pilgrimages brought it  
Many careless wanderers.  
You and I had longer sought it,  
But our luck was worse.

Till the idle search you quitted,  
Empty-handed, and were gone—  
But, with labour unremitted,  
I have still sought on.  
On no moor, in August weather,—  
A blind lane the plague reeks through--  
Love, to-day I've found white heather,  
This I wear—for you !

## DREAMLAND.

**I**N the dim realm I wandered through,  
The shadow land of sleep,  
Came many souls of lovers true,  
A tryst unknown to keep.

There came the God of Dreams to rule  
His phantom kingdom o'er,  
And roses white and wonderful,  
And ghostly lilies bore.

And as I wandered, loneliest,  
The spirits free among,  
Unto all those whose love was blest  
The fairest flowers he flung.

Then I caught his garment's floating hem,  
Murmuring bitterly :  
" King, all the day-light is for them—  
And hast thou naught for me ? "

An instant as I stayed him there  
He looked upon my face,  
Before his garment's fold of air  
Melted from my embrace.



Then, swifter than a shadow flies,  
He passed, and no flower fell—  
But his eyes were as my lost love's eyes,  
Looking a last farewell.

## METEMPSYCHOSIS.

**I**N the ages long ago,  
In some dim enchanted vale,  
You were once a rose I know,  
And I was a nightingale,  
Singing sweet and singing long,  
Singing sadly the night through,  
And the burden of the song,  
All of you !

Me your radiance once fell o'er,  
You the moon, and I the tide,  
Ebbing, flowing, evermore,  
To your impulse I replied;  
You shone on and I surged on,  
Troubled was my mighty sea  
When your silver glory shone  
Over me.

Once again in ages far  
Fell a lustre dim and dear—  
Well I knew your evening star,  
Bending o'er my dusky mere.

Ah, but if it ne'er pierced through  
Gathering gloom, your pallid glow,  
All the night I mourned for you,  
Sighing low.

By your strange unfathomed eyes,  
Oh, my star, my destiny,  
In whatever changing guise,  
You are still the fate of me.  
Shadowy gift the high gods gave,  
Time and Death that shall deride,  
To eternity your slave  
To abide!

## JOURNEYING.

**S**O still I go : so still is all,  
I cannot hear mine own step fall  
Upon the shrivelled grass.  
Only the silence beats and stirs,  
And conjures up strange wanderers  
Before me as I pass.

I cannot see the sun, and yet  
The road lies wrapt in dusty heat,  
And a dull glare alway ;  
And sullen are the clouds that sleep  
Uncleft by lightning, o'er the steep  
Of pale and livid grey.

There is no dawn, nor eventide ;  
As still as Death does Time abide,  
His heart beats faint and slow.  
Of Time no longer I take heed,  
With steps that loiter not, nor speed,  
Through the lone land I go.



Immeasurably far away,  
Under no heights of pallid grey—  
    Where blinding sands are blown  
Across the desert limitless,  
I see another traveller press,  
    As utterly alone.

All haste is numb, e'en sorrow dies ;  
Passionless are the memories  
    Once thrilled with woe or bliss.  
Yet we press onward—it may be  
Our paths may meet at the great sea,  
    Who have no hope but this.

## THE LAST DANCE.

**S**INCE whatsoe'er befalls us,  
We too have been as one,  
Since the wild music calls us,  
That now is well-nigh done—  
Since I may never meet you  
To all eternity,  
Ere parting I entreat you  
For one more dance with me.

To-night in many dances  
We have passed mutely by,  
And yet all evil chances  
Forbade us to draw nigh.  
Not thus did Fate deride me !  
Too well my spirit knew  
You only were beside me,  
And still I danced with you !

Now the bright ranks are thinning,  
Failing the melodies ;  
The pain is but beginning  
That follows on the bliss ;  
Such bliss, there's no transcending  
In realms of fadeless light—  
Yet I would all were ending,  
With our last dance to-night.

## LACHRYMÆ RERUM.

**S**O you to the sunset say good-bye,  
And the last is bright,  
The sky serene as a pictured sky—  
One hardly can think the light will die  
That we watch to-night.

Why, you were with Nature almost one,  
And her love you know—  
The wind o'er your idle head will moan,  
The rain will fall on your dwelling lone,  
Heavy tears and slow.

Did she bless her child with her changing spell  
Of mortality  
That you should be loved more passing well ?  
Yet it seems a thing incredible  
-You should cease to be.

There are some of Death have little fear,  
They have fought and prayed ;

They will walk with God in the daylight clear  
Mid fadeless flowers. Can they be as dear  
As our flowers that fade ?

Can they be as sweet as the passing rose  
In the summer's breath,  
Or the Tree of Life avail for those  
Who ask but the falling leaf that grows  
In the way of death ?

And now for us has the night begun  
That is yet our own.  
The hours grow dearer, so fast they run ;  
The world rolls on to the setting sun  
I shall watch alone.

Yet all love might, though my faith be cold,  
I would give or do,  
If these brief sunsets of paling gold,  
This wind that washes the forest old,  
I could keep for you !



## FORGIVENESS.

**L**IFE is not utterly amiss.  
    'Twould be ungracious to despair,  
I fancy, on a day like this,  
    In such a free, soft air.  
One ceases to climb fast. Ah well !  
    There's a spring day before, my dear—  
I'll show you where the asphodel  
    Grew on the moor last year.

We bear no proud victorious sheaf,  
    We have no "Harvest Home" to raise—  
And yet perhaps a withered leaf  
    May sometimes give God praise,  
As through its failing being run  
    Old thrills of earth and wind and rain,  
Before it passes to be one  
    With wind and earth again.

And yet, not utterly in vain,  
We bore the burden and the heat,  
We shared the sacrament of pain—  
Altar where all men meet !  
And now awhile have peace, nor grieve,  
Here in the moorland's joyous breath—  
Until our erring souls receive  
The sacrament of Death !

SONG.

**T**O your silence, my king,  
They bring you white flowers ;  
For the love that was ours  
I've no blossom to bring.

They shall wither away,  
Though their fragrance be sweet.  
In the dark at your feet,  
Let a living soul stay !

## VIGIL.

“ **B**ELOVED, I have waited long  
To see your ship come in,  
I've made me ready for voyaging,  
I've made me free from sin.

“ White is my raiment as the snow,  
I've washed my soul with tears.  
I knew that you would come for me  
In the fulness of the years.

“ The face that was so sad and wan,  
It is all glorious now—  
There's an eternal beauty dwells,  
Belovèd, on my brow.”

The ship came in like a white ghost,  
The mist fell round her track—  
There was one that came in on the deck,  
There were two that she took back.



## THE QUEEN'S FORESTER.

THEY chose me for my sturdy frame  
That is so tall and strong,  
For my swift step and my sure aim—  
She chose him for his song.  
And sing he doth, and rarely sing,  
And in her eyes revealed  
I know a song a fairer thing  
Than spoils from flood or field.

I hear his song float through the air,  
Melodious and grand—  
I see the light their faces wear,  
But cannot understand.  
Ay, I've the body, he's the soul—  
Yet there's a link between ;  
There is but one commands the whole—  
There only is one Queen.

My face is ruddiest brown ; but white  
His brow, and passing high :  
He warbleth songs 'neath the moon's light—  
Like a tired hound I lie.

I wish I loved stars more than sleep,  
    Songs more than plainest fare—  
I wish my suffering went deep,—  
    More deep my gladness were.

And yet, this hard rough peasant hand  
    And brain and heart I'd spend,  
If, Poet, I might take my stand  
    Beside you at the end,  
Might but the angels point one way,  
    And say: "No bar between—  
Unlike in soul and body they,  
    Yet had they both one Queen!"

## BALLAD.

“ **O** THOU lady, fair and proud,  
Why dost thou wander lone ?  
There's lightning sheathed in yon grey cloud,  
And the wind begins to moan.

“ Now haste and turn, thou lady bright,  
From this forsaken shore ! ”  
“ Nay, but I seek the truest knight  
That ever armour bore.

“ My bridal morn is sad and bleak,  
The shore is desolate ;  
But I must come my love to seek,  
Where lonely he doth wait.

“ All night I sought but could not find,  
I went with hurrying feet,  
And I heard bells ringing in the wind,  
And music wild and sweet.

“ There is a knight on the shore that lies,  
And wounded sore is he,  
His sword is broke, his glazed eyes  
Look out upon the sea.

“ There’s little welcome in thy hand,  
My love, or in thy kiss !  
And we have no gay wedding band,  
But there is none we miss.

“ And by no priest the rite is said,  
But by the wind and sea,  
And cold, cold is the bridal bed,  
But warm enough for me.

“ So soundly sleeping we shall lie,  
We shall not heed nor hear  
Though the wind to the breakers call and cry,  
For ever drawing near.

“ Though upon thy shield the lightning glance  
Out of yon sky of grey—  
Though the surf shall shift thy broken lance  
With its tumultuous play.

“ I’ll staunch the wound with my raven hair,  
Whence the blood flowed so free—  
And ever my soul with thine shall fare,  
Oh, only love of me ! ”

• • • •



With her raven hair she's hid the wound  
That was so broad and deep—  
She has wrapt him with her mantle round,  
The sounder for to sleep.

And the wind is blowing shrill and bleak,  
And louder moans the tide,  
But her soul is gone his soul to seek,  
Wherever it abide.

## TO BABYLON.

### TO BABYLON.

COMRADE, now the dawn is nigh,  
Light is veiling every star.  
Pale against the paling sky  
Gleams a citadel afar.  
Where the earth and sky are one,  
Comrade, it is Babylon.

Comrade, now the noonday blaze  
Beats upon us as we go ;  
But I see a city's maze  
Grey against the fiery glow,  
Shadowy towers, cool streams that run  
Neath the walls of Babylon.

Comrade, had we ever guessed  
Half the weary miles between !  
Now the sun is near the West,  
Now the trees the city screen,  
Ends the journey, long begun,  
We are nearing Babylon.

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Comrade, now the night is late,  
In the darkness, we must be  
Very near the city gate,  
Where is room for thee and me.  
Rest we now to morning sun—  
We shall wake at Babylon !

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